

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
January 2020

Dear Brothers and Friends,

I write to you concerning the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity which begins on January 18th and ends on January 25th. This annual letter is a reminder and an encouragement to all of us to participate in the Week of Prayer in some appropriate way.

The material for the 2020 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity comes from Christian Churches in Malta and Gozo. On 10th February many Christians in Malta and Gozo celebrate the Feast of the Shipwreck of St Paul remembering and giving thanks for the arrival of Christian faith on those islands. The reading from the Acts of the Apostles used for the feast is the text chosen for this year's Week of Prayer. The theme "Unusual kindness" comes from 'The natives showed us unusual kindness.' (Acts 28:2).

Hospitality is a much needed virtue in our search for Christian unity. It invites us to a greater generosity towards those in need. The people who showed unusual kindness to Paul and his companions did not yet know Christ. Yet it is through their unusual kindness that a divided people were drawn closer together. Our own Christian unity will be discovered not only through showing hospitality to one another, but also through respectful and open encounters with those who do not share our language, culture or faith.

The perspective from Malta and Gozo is an invitation to us to reflect more deeply on the divisions we encounter here in this part of the world and to work actively to promote mutual conversation and genuine solidarity among all in the spirit of the Gospel.

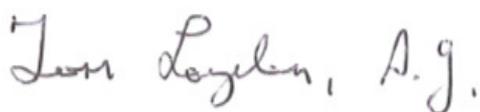
The annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity offers us a particular opportunity to celebrate what we have in common, to express sorrow for the pain caused by our divisions and to ask the Lord to strengthen us in the hope that we will all be one someday in the future.

I offer some suggestions as to how we can participate in the Week. You will, of course, have ideas of your own based on your own experience and context.

- Remember the intentions of the Week in personal and communal prayer.
- Use some part of the order of service in the resources sent along with this letter in either personal or communal prayer.
- Attend an ecumenical service for Christian Unity in your own area.
- Attend a Sunday Service in a church of another tradition in your area.
- Invite a Christian of another tradition to join a community or an apostolate for a brief time of shared prayer or for a meal.

May the Spirit of Unity continue to be active in our midst. We give thanks for the growth in unity which we have seen in the past half century and we ask the Lord's blessing on the work that still needs to be done.

Your brother in the Lord,



Tom Layden, SJ